

shield. Dorsal scale rows 15 at mid-body. Ventrals 155-172 (av. 163). Anal entire. Subcaudals single, 25-32 (av. 28.6).

Head and nape unbroken shiny black. Remainder of upper surface bright reddish brown. Lips and entire under surface white.

Distribution: Southern Western Australia from about Latitude 27° south to Geraldton, Three Springs, Bunjil and Kalgoorlie, and east to Laverton and Naretha.

Comments: The distribution of *monachus* is generally north of that of *gouldi*, which extends as far north as Watheroo, Dalwallinu, Koorda, Merredin, Corinthian (11 m. NW of Southern Cross), Hampton Hill (17 mi. E of Kalgoorlie) and the trans-Australian railway eastwards from Rawlinna. The two species are thus sympatric only in the Kalgoorlie district. The specimen of *gouldi* from Hampton Hill (R3749) shows no intergradation with *monachus*, nor do any other *gouldi* (e.g., from Watheroo, Dalwallinu and Rawlinna) from near the range of *monachus*.

The name *monachus* (Latin for "monk") alludes to the black hood.

FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THE RUFF IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By DEAN FISHER, Beverley.

The Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) is a Palearctic breeding species which during the northern winter migrates south to the southern part of this area and throughout the Ethiopian and Oriental regions. It is a vagrant to North America but was unknown from the Australasian region until January, 1962, when the first Australian specimen, a female which is known as the Reeve, was collected at Pt. Gawler, South Australia (A. McEvey, *The Emu*, 63, 1963: 35).

Now the second Australian specimen and the first occurrence in Western Australia may be recorded. On October 29, 1963, I collected a specimen of the Reeve at the Lower King River about six miles north-east of Albany. The bird had been discovered the previous day by Mr Arnold McGill, Mr Fred Johnston, and myself when we were studying a large number of waders feeding far out on the tidal mudflats of the river just above the bridge at the upper end of Oyster Harbour. The Reeve was in the company of four Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (*Erolia acuminata*) from which it was distinguished by its slightly larger size and generally more erect stance. Closer study showed that it lacked the prominent stripe above the eye and rusty colour on top of the head of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, but in all other characteristics including manner of feeding it appeared in the field to be nearly identical with this species. It seemed to prefer the company of the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers to nearby Greenshanks (*Tringa nebularia*), Little Stints (*Erolia ruficollis*) and a Curlew Sandpiper (*E. ferruginea*). All the waders were very restless and wary and it was impossible to study the Reeve closer than 150 yards and it was never seen well in flight. A 30

power telescope was used for observing but positive identification of the Reeve was not made until after it was collected when examination showed the presence of the web at the base of the toes. It was feeding in the same locality for two consecutive days but was present, as were the other waders, only when the tide was low exposing the wide mudflats.

The specimen was prepared as a study skin by Mr. Julian Ford and is now in the W.A. Museum (No. A9228). Its particulars are: female, with small ovary and unconvoluted oviduct indicating a young bird; iris, brown; legs, grey; toes, black; bill, blackish-brown, horn at base of lower mandible; weight, 86 gm.; length, 242 mm.; wing, 153, 154; wingspread 408; culmen (to tip of feathers), 29.5; culmen (to base of skull), 36.5; tarsus, 40; trace moult in scapular region and faintest trace on neck.

A. McEvey (*loc. cit.*) states that "continued close attention to waders by field observers might throw light on the Australian status of the Ruff, which at present, must stand as 'rare vagrant'." The present record, coming less than two years after the first specimen was collected, indicates that the Ruff may previously have been overlooked in Australia and may be a rare but regular visitor. It is interesting to note that both Australian records are from the south coast. Apparently the birds were on their way south and could go no further. In all probability they reached the south coast via the east or west coasts, and it seems likely that the Ruff will eventually be found to occur elsewhere in Australia. In its vast range the Ruff shows a tolerance to a wide variety of habitats and could be expected to occur almost anywhere there is water, though tidal rivers and mudflats may be preferred here in Australia. In California where the Ruff has only recently been found to occur (R. G. McCaskie, *The Condor*, 65, 1963: 166) the species shows a preference for small fresh water pools.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Range Extension of the Orchid, *Monadenia micrantha*.—During November 1963 I found the South African orchid, *Monadenia micrantha*, at the Kendenup townsite and the Kendenup school. Specimens were shown to Mr. V. N. Scrventy at the Cranbrook Wild Life Show on November 21.

The history of this introduced orchid in Western Australia is summarised by Rica Erickson (*W. Aust. Nat.*, 3, 1952: 120) who showed that it was spreading from its probable focus, at Albany, and by 1951 had reached Mt. Barker. The Kendenup occurrence appears to be the most northerly reported so far.

—F. W. ROWE, Kendenup.

Blowfish Kills Silver Gull.—At Pelican Point, Swan River Estuary, on September 20, 1963, I came across a dead, brown-flecked immature Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*). It appeared to have died only a short time previously, rigor mortis not having set in